

2000-78-94

Paul McCarthy, Bob Geiman

Stephen Lay

1982 ?

Fairbanks, Alaska

Series: University focus

University of Alaska campus in Fairbanks, Alaska

Stephen Lay said Alaskans are relatively close to their history and for the most part interested in it. This is obvious to Paul McCarthy, head of the Alaska Polar Regions Department at the Rasmuson Library at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). The department catalogs, collects and makes available materials and records. Access to the collections for everyone is the primary duty according to Paul McCarthy. McCarthy said they see the resources as a treasury of original documents, oral interviews, rare books, and current published material that's available for study and use by serious scholars. They define serious scholars not just as an academic scholar, but the journalist, the lay person who is very interested in Alaska history and development, the high school student who has serious a serious interest in exploring a particular aspect of the state's history, or the interested lay person who has a commitment to understand better the history of this area. Lay said gathering and cataloging such materials is a massive job. He talked about the size of the collection. As technology changes the methods of recording information also changes. The Alaska Polar Regions Department is adding sections to include these new methods. Already there are more than 1500 taped oral interviews and 1100 microfilmed collections. McCarthy said one of the things they are trying to do is be a definitive source for the study of Alaska's history and development. They are attempting to collect records of people and businesses. They are attempting to design a program of interviewing outstanding Alaskans, but also Alaskans who may not have reaped any kind of public note whose stories demonstrate how the average person lived and worked in Alaska. Lay said as collections grow interest in Alaska and Polar Regions is expanding. Materials available at Rasmuson Library are considered to be the premiere collection of cold regions materials in the western world. According to the director of UAF libraries Robert Geiman there is a future of heavy use of the Alaska and Polar Regions collections. Geiman said they have researchers coming to Fairbanks specifically to work with the collection from foreign countries. As they build the program it serves the student, faculty and researchers first and also serves worldwide research needs and concerns.

Stephen Lay talked about campus activities for the week.